



In a North Country Village

by M. E. Francis (1859-1930)

M. E. Francis was born Mary E. Sweetman in Dublin and moved to Lancashire on her marriage to Francis Nicholas Blundell. The Blundell family were squires of Little Crosby, the last Catholic recusant village in England, which lies a few miles north of Liverpool. Blundell died young and Mary went on to write more than 50 books, using her husband's Christian name as pen name, including this collection of 12 stories set in Little Crosby ('Thornleigh'). A romantic portrait of 19th century village life written from an aristocratic point of view, *In a North Country Village* (1896) is built around striking portraits of strong Lancashire women surviving in the face of Hardy-esque tragedy and the weaknesses of their men folk. M. E. Francis set many of her books in Ireland and Dorset, but several were set in Lancashire, including *A Daughter of the Soil* (1895), *Yeoman Fleetwood* (1900) and *Marjory o'th' Mill* (1907).

Total running time: 5:00:40
Read by Phil Benson

cover design by Kathryn Delaney
frontispiece illustration from the book by Frank Felloes



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